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Book Review

Management of Severe Malaria. A Practical Handbook, 2nd edition. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2000. vii+70pp. Price Sw.fr 15.-/US\$ 13.50 (in developing countries Sw.fr 10.50). ISBN 92-4-154523-2. Available in English; French and Spanish in preparation.

Nine years after its first publication, this little book appears at last in the second edition. The authors have managed to keep it short and concise despite the fact that they have included essential new information. It even appears leaner owing to clearer definitions in most chapters. More evidence-based recommendations are the result of a decade of intense malaria research. The summary of relevant facts reflects the more detailed reference publication [WHO (2000). Severe falciparum malaria. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, **94**, supplement 1].

The booklet provides an excellent guide to antimalarial chemotherapy of severe falciparum malaria, right at the very beginning where the user will find it easily. The inclusion of the precise recommendations regarding the use of artemisinin derivatives in the management of severe falciparum malaria is highly welcome as it provides true alternatives to parenteral quinine treatment. The introduction deals briefly with uncomplicated malaria and is followed by an improved map of the global status of malaria. The definition of severe falciparum malaria has

been updated and thoughtfully expanded by a paragraph on 'who is at risk'.

The parts on general management and on nursing care remain without major changes. The clinical features and management of complications in adults, pregnant women and children were amended to present knowledge.

The major new achievement is in the diagnosis section: the indicators of a poor prognosis in children and adults with severe malaria provide essential hints at all levels of health care to assess severe falciparum malaria. It would have been a useful addition to show mature pigmented parasites and polymorphonuclear leucocytes with visible malaria pigment in the attached figures as these prognostic indicators are not widely known in endemic areas.

The section on common errors in diagnosis and management, a selection of references and the most useful annexes on drugs, coma scales, and technical procedures of access to the circulation round up the 69 pages.

The publication is an indispensable working tool for all clinical professional staff and other responsible health personnel working in hospitals or health centres in malarious areas of the world.

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